

EVERYDAY FAITH: "A Costly Move"

INTRODUCTION

- **Key Idea:** God wonderfully uses **everyday faith, everyday kindness** to push back against the darkness and accomplish His plan.

Ruth 1:1-5 tells the story of a man named Elimelech who made a poor decision. Facing pressure and pain, he makes a rash and emotional decision that leads to tremendous hurt and heartache.

- **Application: Running from your challenge or crisis is rarely a good decision.** You may find momentary escape, but it might lead you to a decade of sorrow and disappointment.

THE DAYS (RUTH 1:1-2)

- The book is set in the **period of the Judges**: a dark and dismal chapter in Israel's history.

In the book of Judges, there are **seven cycles** of sin and deliverance: Israel serves the Lord, Israel falls into idolatry, the Lord sends a judge, Israel repents, and God delivers. This happens seven times in the book of Judges.

- In the midst of this dark season, the book of Ruth shines a spotlight on the faithfulness of a few.

THE DECISION (RUTH 1:2)

- In the midst of the famine, Elimelech decides to forsake his ancestral home. He goes to **Moab**, enemy territory.
- This is a **costly move**, a bad decision. It will be ten long horrible years for this family and end up in Naomi's grief and bitterness (Ruth 1:21).

Why this was a bad decision:

1. Elimelech ignored the negative example of Abraham (Genesis 12:10-20).
2. He read his circumstances wrongly and emotionally. He did not view his circumstances through the lens of Scripture.
3. He should have responded in repentance. (Deuteronomy 28, 30:1-3).

Applications:

1. **Our individual decisions massively affect other people.** You don't get to make a decision in isolation.
2. **Sin will take you farther than you want to go.** Elimelech wanted to go to Moab temporarily but his family ended up staying for ten years.

THE DEATH (RUTH 1:3-5)

- Ruth 1:1-5 sets us up for the rest of the story. Before we're done, we will see Naomi's loss redeemed and her grandchild incorporated into the bloodline of the Messiah.
- God works all things together for good and that includes our sin.

God is so gloriously sovereign that he can write our mess ups and our foul-ups in our sin and our disobedience into a story that is glorious. God's purpose can't be thwarted or stymied by man's sin or disobedience. Sin is consequential, but God's sovereign grace has not written the last chapter in any one of our lives. Even when we make a wrong turn, God is still in the driver's seat. God's wise providence is not held hostage by man's foolishness.

Sermon Application Questions

May 17, 2020

PERSONAL RESPONSES

1

Pastor Philip noted that the book of Ruth is set in the period of the Judges: a dark and dismal chapter in Israel's history.

This was a time of moral apostasy, economic hardship, tribal tension, spiritual jeopardy, and national shame. Yet God was at work to bring the fulfillment of His promises.

What parallels do you find from the setting of the book of Ruth and the period that we find ourselves in today? Are any of these descriptions (moral apostasy, economic hardship, tribal tension, etc.) applicable to the times that we live in?

How does the book of Ruth give hope to believers who are living through this difficult season of life?

2

Our individual choices massively impact other people. We do not decide and we do not disobey in isolation. It was Elimelech who made a bad decision yet Naomi and his sons were brought along in the consequences of that decision.

John MacArthur has said this: "There are some people in my life that I refuse to disappoint."

Who are the people in your life who would be greatly impacted if you should make a foolish decision?

Who are the people in your life that you will refuse to disappoint?

DIGGING DEEPER

1

Take some time and reflect on some of the key passages related to this week's sermon. Ask the Lord for help in making application of these truths to your life.

Leviticus 26:14-16

But if you will not listen to me and will not do all these commandments, if you spurn my statutes, and if your soul abhors my rules, so that you will not do all my commandments, but break my covenant, then I will do this to you: I will visit you with panic, with wasting disease and fever that consume the eyes and make the heart ache. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.

Ruth 1:16-17

But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you."

1 Thessalonians 4:10-12

But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

James 1:14-15

But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Read **Ruth 1:1-5** carefully with a view towards understanding Elimelech's bad decision.

Elimelech reacted to his circumstances emotionally and did not read them through the lens of Scripture. In this way, God was not king over Elimelech's decision-making process. He let his emotions act as king and circumstances act as king.

2

Observe: Seasons of adversity reveal who we actually obey as our functional authority.

Evaluate: What are the decisions that are facing you today? What Scriptures are you applying to these decisions? Are you submitting your emotions to the unchanging truths of God's Word?

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Pastor Philip encouraged us with these words:

The real heroes are not always the charismatic leaders because as the book of judges shows us, they come and they go and they rise and they fall. But the work of God is done by godly plodders, hard domestic workers, mothers and fathers leaving a legacy of faithful families. These are the quiet servants of God who live peaceable lives. More often than not, God continues his work with ordinary people doing ordinary things that from their perspective doesn't look like much. But within the providence and sovereign plan of God, it becomes something great.

1

What are the acts of "ordinary and quiet faithfulness" that you can engage in this week?

In what ways can you heed the admonition of **1 Thessalonians 4:11** – "aspire to live quietly. . . to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you."

Pastor Philip encouraged us by saying "Our own faithlessness in the past does not preclude us to a God-planned, enriched future. Ruth would remind us that even our messes can be swallowed up into the mystery of God's providence. . . God can start a new chapter in our lives."

2

Are there any bad decisions that you have made in the past that lead you to discouragement or regret?

How does the book of Ruth give hope for a brighter future?